6-30-2020

Utah State University: English Composition Library Instruction Program – A Program within Programs

Katie Strand
Utah State University

Dory Rosenberg
Utah State University

McKenzie Hyde
Utah State University

Recommended Citation

Strand, K., Rosenberg, D., Hyde, M. (2020). "Utah State University: English Composition Library Instruction Program – A Program within Programs." Hidden Architectures of Information Literacy Programs: Structures, Practices and Contexts.

UtahStateUniversity
MERRILL-CAZIER LIBRARY

Chapter 12

Utah State University

English Composition Library Instruction Program—A Program within Programs

Katie Strand, Dory Rosenberg, and McKenzie Hyde

Population Served

Utah State University (USU) is our state's only land-grant institution, which supports both strong undergraduate and graduate programs. The students on our main campus are primarily traditional students. However, we also serve a large online and regional campus student population with many students who are classified as nontraditional. Given the various mediums of instruction at our school, our library provides information literacy through face-to-face and online courses, as well as courses that use interactive videoconferencing technology (i.e., broadcast classes). Total enrollment is approximately 27,700, of which 18,000 attend the main Logan Campus. Approximately 89 percent of our student population is made up of undergraduates.[1]

Program Scope

This case study will describe our English Composition Library Instruction Program (ECLIP), which is a program within our library-wide instruction efforts and a collaborative partner with USU's Writing Program, housed within the English department. Our library does not offer a for-credit information literacy course, and instead, library instruction is integrated at all course levels. Moreover, to allow you to better understand ECLIP,

it is important to describe the current state of our library's broader instruction program, which includes (1) ECLIP, an in-depth integration through first- and second-year writing courses; (2) instruction in the majors by liaison librarians assigned to academic departments; (3) digital literacy instruction provided by our Digital Initiatives unit; (4) primary source analysis and use of materials directed by our Special Collections and Archives unit, and (5) research assignment design workshops coordinated and facilitated by librarians for university faculty. These efforts span library divisions, and historically these areas of instruction have predominantly worked independently of each other with little interaction in relation to assessment or planning. As of 2014, a formal Coordinator of Instruction was appointed with the idea of offering support across these varied instructional efforts. However, in practice, that position has worked most closely in supporting the instruction efforts of our liaison librarians and ECLIP. With the goal of unifying assessment and breaking down the silos of instruction within the areas described above, a new library-wide Instruction Committee was formed in 2018. This new committee includes representatives from across the library, and the group is chaired by the Coordinator of Instruction. Currently, this committee is working to redefine the structure and goals of a library-wide information literacy program and to clarify how smaller programs, such as ECLIP, connect to larger library-wide assessment and planning.

ECLIP currently consists of an integration with our Writing Program's English 1010 and English 2010 courses. Both of these courses have their own separate objectives and learning outcomes, and the overall goal is that once students finish (or test out of) both courses, they will have developed foundational research and writing skills related to rhetorical argumentation. With this goal in mind, English 1010 is seen as a stepping stone to English 2010. Librarians are available to meet with students one-on-one for both English 1010 and 2010 courses. However, our integration with English 1010 is online only, while we offer in-person library sessions for English 2010. In addition to the interactive tutorials and videos embedded in English 1010 courses, lessons targeting course-specific information literacy needs are taught by course instructors in their classroom. For our regional campus and online students, librarians offer support through Canvas (our learning management system), broadcast classes, or consultations via email or phone. Our goal in describing our ECLIP program is to showcase an example of an internal structure that falls under a larger umbrella of information literacy goals and expectations library-wide.

Operations

Our Coordinator of Instruction also currently serves as the unit head of Learning and Engagement Services (LES), which is part of our library's Instruction, Collections, and Patron Services division. Prior to 2017, the work of coordinating ECLIP was part of the coordinator's responsibilities. However, due to concerns about sustainability and workload, ECLIP was separated, and in 2017 an ECLIP Coordinator role was created and is now held by a librarian in LES.

The ECLIP Coordinator leads a core team of two teaching assistants and oversees instruction related to English 1010 and English 2010, while the LES unit head oversees all other unit work. Each semester, LES librarians are assigned multiple sections of English 1010 and English 2010. On average each librarian will partner with five to seven courses, and our two teaching assistants will partner with twelve to fifteen courses. At a minimum,

librarians are expected to communicate and collaborate with instructors in regard to library-developed materials and serve as a direct library resource for students. On average, English 2010 students will attend two to three information literacy instruction classes led by their assigned librarians. Currently, our strongest integration is with face-to-face courses at our main campus.

One major operational challenge we experience with face-to-face integration is balancing librarian workloads. LES librarians hold many other roles, including liaison assignments, that impact how much time we can ask in support of ECLIP. One strategy we've used in navigating this challenge is applying a targeted approach when creating librarian/instructor partnerships. For example, graduate instructors who teach English 2010 are required to bring their classes to the library three times for specific lessons; however, some lecturers and adjunct instructors come to the library for fewer than three sessions. Based on a librarian's workload, the ECLIP Coordinator and two teaching assistants pair librarians with instructors whose course load and library content will match the librarians' availability. This partnering approach is a time-intensive endeavor that involves at least two to three meetings toward the end of each semester at which the ECLIP Coordinator and two teaching assistants look at the current partnerships and tentatively plan for any changes that might need to be made due to workload shifts, librarian sabbaticals, number of composition sections to be offered, or changes in instructors' class assignments. Taking this in-depth approach to partnerships allows us to work around librarians' shifting workloads, so we can better respond to the needs of librarians individually and the unit at large.

An example of a related operational challenge connects to reserving rooms for our English 2010 library sessions. As of fall 2018, the ECLIP Coordinator and two teaching assistants collaborated with Writing Program administration to preschedule all library days for English 2010 courses taught by a graduate instructor. Prior to this change, librarians scheduled their own library days and were in charge of making sure a library room was available for their session. The response to this prescheduling has been overwhelmingly positive from librarians who teach these composition sessions. However, this change has added to the workload of the ECLIP Coordinator and teaching assistants, and also brings up a question of access. With the prescheduling, ECLIP has most, if not all, of our library instruction rooms booked for six days each semester. If other instruction efforts across the library need an instruction room during one of our prescheduled days, how do we effectively share the space? Likewise, how can ECLIP be as efficient as possible when rooms often need to be reserved before the English department finalizes class schedules?

Another operational challenge is maintaining consistency in library services provided at our main campus, and regional locations, and in online courses. A specific example of this challenge is evident in our integration with English 1010. Given that research demands in English 1010 are typically much less than English 2010 and that our program strives to maintain sustainable workloads for librarians, our current integration with English 1010 is online only. However, instructors at our regional campuses often have more autonomy over their curriculum, and the result is that some English 1010 classes teach more research elements than others. While students will receive a more in-depth library integration when they later take English 2010, the concern is still there that students, and especially incoming freshmen, are being missed at their time of need. One of the top priorities of our program is to ensure that the services we provide to our online and regional students are equivalent to what students receive in face-to-face Logan campus–based courses. How we will develop in this area moving forward is heavily reliant on the Writing Program

itself, which is currently in a process of transition following the retirement of the previous program director.

Marketing

A need for marketing support has been identified in our library. However, we do not currently have a set position that directs this work. In order to market library instruction services more broadly, LES created an instruction services area on our library's website that includes a teaching philosophy, available online tutorials, and scheduling informa-tion.[2] This section of the library website is currently "owned" by LES and primarily targets instruction for discipline-specific classes. However, as our new Instruction Committee moves forward, this ownership and online presence might evolve.

ECLIP, as a smaller program, has an ultimate goal to make sure all of our composition instructors, including lecturers, adjuncts, and graduate instructors, either bring their classes to the library for information literacy instruction or integrate our online materials into their courses. In tackling this goal, we've found that we often need to market library materials and lessons differently based on our instructor group. For example, graduate instructors are currently required by Writing Program administration to teach a set curriculum. While graduate instructors can still modify content to fit their teaching style, ECLIP is able to target marketing based on the common curriculum they teach. As an example of what this looks like in practice, the ECLIP Coordinator drafts emails at the beginning of each semester that librarians then send to their partnered graduate instructors before each online integration or prescheduled library day. Librarians are welcome to add their own voice to the message, but the end result is that the same programmatic message is being sent to graduate instructors.

The ECLIP Coordinator also drafts language that librarians can send to their partnered lecturers and adjunct instructors. However, this instructor population is granted a higher level of autonomy by the Writing Program, and as a result, we market our library support in broader terms when working with these instructors. For example, instead of listing the prescheduled library lessons and content as we do with graduate instructors, our message more heavily encourages lecturers and adjunct instructors to work with their partnered librarians to develop library content that aligns with their course goals and assignments. Ultimately, our end goal is to ensure students are receiving equitable library instruction in all classes, and to be successful in this endeavor we must shape our communication and marketing of library resources based on our respective stakeholder groups.

Collaboration

The Writing Program is one of the library's biggest allies on campus. Its leadership struc-ture consists of a Writing Program director (a faculty member), an associate director of English 2010 (a lecturer), and two associate directors of English 1010 (graduate instruc-tors). In spring 2018, both ECLIP and the Writing Program acquired new leadership. Given this change, new relationships had to be built and mutual trust had to be established before successful collaboration could take place. Numerous face-to-face meetings and inclusive email chains successfully laid the foundation for collaborative working relation-ships between both teams and their leadership.

A recent example of our collaborative efforts was the development of library content designed to match a new curriculum that Writing Program administration released in fall 2018. This redesign provided us with an opportunity to have library materials and resources automatically integrated into the instructor-taught curriculum. In this process, we held face-to-face meetings with all Writing Program administration, the ECLIP Coordinator, and two library teaching assistants to discuss cohesion and growth between the two courses. Likewise, smaller meetings with individual English 1010 or English 2010 leadership were used for lesson development and finalizing integration details. Collaboration at the administrative level has supported the organic nature of our current integration, especially with graduate instructor–led courses.

Even with administrative support, our instruction would have little to no impact without the continued support and cooperation of individual instructors. It is the librarian's responsibility to initiate communication with instructors and demonstrate how our expertise can help their students succeed. Although it is not always possible, we try to keep instructors partnered with the same librarians semester after semester. This allows instructor/librarian relationships to flourish by setting the foundation for deeper collaboration and a better understanding of individual strengths.

Our relationships with our current allies require consistent commitment and open communication. We seek out feedback on our services in both formal and informal settings. For example, in spring 2018, we held focus groups for all English 2010 instructors. The primary goal of the focus groups was to find out how we could improve our current collaboration model. From these focus groups, we learned that several instructors felt a stronger focus on evaluating sources was needed in our English 2010 content. We used this feedback, along with findings from other assessment projects, in the redesign of our materials in fall 2018 and were able to address these concerns by offering a new evaluating sources lesson. Maintaining collaborative relationships with our partnered program, remaining open to change, and actively responding to constructive criticism has allowed us to become more deeply integrated into composition curriculums.

Assessment

We cultivate a culture of assessment in our library by engaging in a cyclical and iterative process that is informed by our unit's instruction mission and course learning outcomes. In relation to ECLIP, each of our developed lesson plans includes an element of formative assessment, whether that be through gathering examples of student work or asking students to contribute to a Canvas discussion board. We also encourage individual librarians to ask students to complete anonymous surveys at the end of their final library session. We create this survey using Qualtrics and include the survey link on the English 2010 LibGuide. Each semester, we receive hundreds of student responses, and individual librarians are able to use that data for promotion and tenure or other professional development needs. Moreover, we were able to use trends gathered from this data to inform the redesign of our library curriculum for fall 2018. When analyzing the data, we learned that the library sessions felt repetitive for students. The combination of the prework materials we asked instructors to share with their students before a library session and the library session's content itself was redundant. As a result, we revised the content for spring 2019

and specifically pared down the prework and used different examples and visuals in the prework materials than those we share in our library session.

Programmatically, we have initiated and completed several larger assessment projects. For example, in fall 2017, a team of LES librarians completed an analysis of seventy-nine English 2010 persuasive research essays, and their study is discussed in a recent article in *Communications in Information Literacy*.[3] In brief, the team used multiple rubrics to identify shifts in student learning and compared the results to findings from a previous study completed by LES librarians. The findings indicated that our instruction was contributing to student improvements in synthesis, topic refinement, and source variety. However, the analysis also informed us that our students are still struggling with evaluating sources, incorporating multiple perspectives, and maintaining their own voice when synthesizing their research. These larger assessment projects have been instrumental in making sure our integration with the Writing Program and the content we teach does not become static.

In order to make sure we are conducting our assessment studies ethically and to be able to use data collected for publication purposes, we submit Institutional Review Board (IRB) protocols for projects that are intended for purposes beyond the internal structure of ECLIP or LES. Much of our assessment work has involved human participants or examples of student work, and according to the requirements of our university's IRB office, we submit protocols even if our study will be categorized as exempt. For example, our most recent focus group study was categorized as exempt, but we still had to have the language and marketing materials we used approved by IRB as our study incorporated human participants. Overall, our university's IRB office is very responsive and supportive of library research, but the process does add extra logistics and work for larger projects. While we still pursue these larger assessment needs, we are continually looking for assessment data for internal use only in improving our program and procedures.

Pedagogical Highlights

We believe that students learn research skills best when those skills are tied to specific, immediate, and class-related needs, and as a result, ECLIP's pedagogical approach is heavily student-centered. Our lessons are carefully scaffolded to ensure that the skills being taught are relevant to course content. For example, in our English 2010 curriculum redesign, we first worked with the Writing Program to design research outcomes for both English 1010 and 2010, and we then applied a backward design approach and used the research outcomes to inform the development of our new lessons. The research outcomes we collaboratively developed are as follows:

English 1010 Research Outcomes:

- Understand the value and characteristics of a variety of sources
- Identify relevant sources in relation to audience and purpose
- Describe the ethical and practical significance of citation

> - Reflect on the challenges and strategies of your research process

English 2010 Research Outcomes:

> - Identify a research question with a manageable scope
> - Evaluate different types of sources in relation to the researcher's information need
> - Recognize the value of multiple perspectives
> - Organize an argument by synthesizing sources into conversation with each other
> - Develop effective searching strategies

All of our face-to-face lessons include some form of active learning, whether that be evaluating case studies or using the library databases in a group activity. Generally, we implement a flipped approach and use online resources to introduce library resources to students and then focus on higher-level skills and active learning practices during class time. However, many lecturers still consistently request database demonstrations rather than specific lessons. While there can be variability in library content depending on the instructor population, we advocate for one-on-one librarian time with students in each of our library sessions. In fact, student surveys continually request more one-on-one time with librarians. Overall, a number of different pedagogical approaches are used in our library sessions. Figure 12.1 represents statistics gathered from fall 2017 through summer 2018 and demonstrates the variety of instruction types utilized in 295 face-to-face English 2010 library sessions. Many library sessions include a combination of instruction types ranging from an orientation to the library to lecture, active learning, or one-on-one interaction.
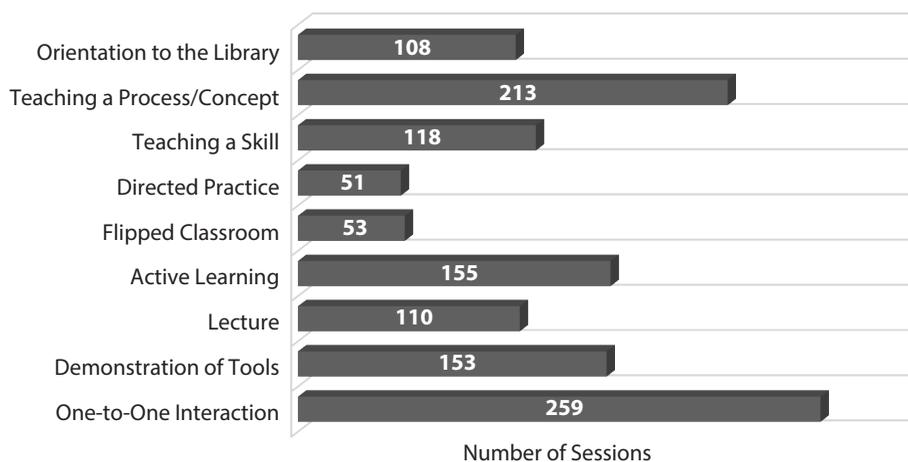
INSTRUCTION TYPES

Figure 12.1
Instruction types in face-to-face English 2010 library sessions, fall 2017– summer 2018

Administrative Highlights

We have a strong partnership with the Writing Program, and our instructional efforts continue to evolve based on iterative assessment and data analysis. We collect different kinds of composition-related data, and this data has played a crucial role in showing the impact of ECLIP in advocating for resources and positions and in initiating conversations on best practices within the LES unit. As an example, a teaching assistant recently visualized themes that emerged from our student survey data and created an engaging graphic that integrated student comments. We used this graphic as a way to spark discussion on instruction practices during an LES meeting. Moreover, for many years, LES has created an annual report that details the work of the unit as a whole, and as of 2018 a separate annual report was created for ECLIP. This report will be shared with Writing Program administration at the end of the academic year, as well as with all library staff via our library-wide email list.

Information Literacy Coordinator Profile

As a whole, our library is moving toward the development of a more structured approach to library instruction. The creation of the library-wide Instruction Committee and the creation of the ECLIP Coordinator position reflect this move at both a larger library-wide level and a smaller program-specific level. The ECLIP Coordinator is a formal role held by a faculty librarian and is responsible for ensuring the ECLIP follows established standards, contributes to the Mission and Vision of the Library, and fosters the continued success and growth of the program. The Coordinator of Library Instruction, who previously facilitated this work, and the current ECLIP Coordinator both have second master's degrees in English, and they both have experience in teaching English composition courses. This familiarity with rhetoric and composition, in both theory and practice, has served as a valuable point of connection when establishing and maintaining relationships with the Writing Program. The current ECLIP Coordinator also serves as the liaison librarian for two academic departments, including the English department. This is the first time the library point person for the Writing Program has also been the library liaison for the English department, and as the Writing Program is housed in the English department, this move has served well in streamlining communication.

What We Wish People Knew

The hardest part of being a targeted program within a larger information literacy effort is fostering a library-wide understanding of our specific instruction area and how it fits within a shared vision of information literacy. We are excited about the ways our new Instruction Committee can help address this challenge. Our advice would be if you have a colleague who teaches in a unit that differs from your area, take the initiative to ask questions about how and what they teach. It's easy to describe communication barriers in the context of working with stakeholders outside the library; however, it's the communication

that happens (or doesn't happen) in house that has the greatest impact on a program's growth and development.

Notes

1. "Utah State University Quick Facts," Utah State University, accessed March 26, 2019, https://www.usu.edu/about/at-a-glance.
2. "Instruction Services," Utah State University Libraries, accessed March 26, 2019, https://library.usu.edu/instruct.
3. Eastman, T., Lundstrom, K., Strand, K., Davis, E., Martin, P. N., Krebs, A., & Hedrich, A. (2018). Closing the Loop: Engaging in a Sustainable and Continuous Cycle of Authentic Assessment to Improve Library Instruction. *Communications in Information Literacy, 12* (2), 64-85.https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2018.12.2.2.

Bibliography

Eastman, T., Lundstrom, K., Strand, K., Davis, E., Martin, P. N., Krebs, A., & Hedrich, A. (2018). Closing the Loop: Engaging in a Sustainable and Continuous Cycle of Authentic Assessment to Improve Library Instruction. *Communications in Information Literacy, 12* (2), 64-85.https://doi.org/10.15760/comminfolit.2018.12.2.2.

Utah State University. "Utah State University Quick Facts." Accessed March 26, 2019. https://www.usu.edu/about/at-a-glance.

Utah State University Libraries. "Instruction Services." Accessed March 26, 2019. https://library.usu.edu/instruct.